

# Role of Lay Counselors in HIV & AIDS Programmes

Enhancing Quality of Care Meeting  
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# Introduction

- Counseling has always been an inherent part of medical care since the beginning



# Background

- With HIV & AIDS, there was increased burden on HC System to manage & care infected & affected persons
- CHWs were placed to support HCPs in providing psychological support to patient



# Who are CHWs/ LC?

- Mostly people who have done the Basic HIV & AIDS Course + VCT/HCBC/PMTCT Training
- Mainly serving on a voluntary basis
- Some receive stipend from government through NGOs



# What do they do?

- Link facilities with communities- formation of support groups, Home visits & community awareness campaigns
- Provide health talks/ education at facilities
- Counsel clients/ couples pre & post HIV test
- Provide on- going, support, infant feeding, treatment readiness & adherence counseling
- Referral to professional care &, social services



# What else can they do?

- Follow up of babies at home through DOTS & at well baby clinics through IMCI
- HIV Testing
- Assist with patient information system & data collection
- Growth monitoring for babies
- Strengthen community participation & involvement-males
- CD4 Monitoring for mothers
- Mentorship



# Training Needs

- Comprehensive HIV & TB training to ensure that they are empowered & able to deal with the needs of all clients especially at household level
- Monitoring & evaluation- data collection
- Comprehensive training on counseling and testing of couples



# Challenges

- Recruitment, placement & training differs per province
- Some are volunteering while some are on stipends
- Stipends differ per province & others are inconsistent
- Scope of operation & responsibilities vary per province





# Recommendations

- Standardized comprehensive training regulated by one body
- A regulatory body to look after the interests of clients and see to it that Lay Counselors adhere to their code of ethics
- A career ladder for lay counselors
- Each lay counselor needs to be mentored by a professional social worker or a psychologist.



# Thank you

